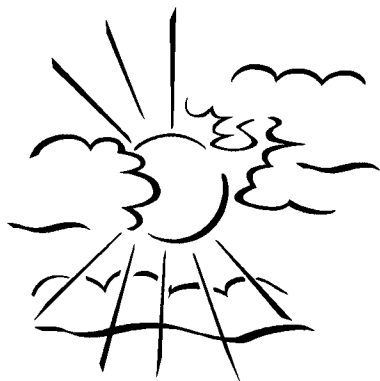


***Department
of
Human
Services***

Prepared by the
DHS Office of
Communications
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Articles in Today's Clips

Wednesday, June 7, 2006

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

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BREAKING NEWS: 911 Operators Charged

By Anu Prakash

Web produced by Christine Lasek

June 7, 2006

The Wayne County prosecutor has announced that charges will be filed against 2 911 operators. The operators are accused of ignoring a young boy's calls for help.

Sharon Nichols and Terri Sutton are the two Emergency Services operators that will be charged with not taking the calls from 5-year-old Robert Turner seriously.

The incident occurred back in February. Robert Turner called 911 twice after his mother, Cheryl, collapsed.

Tapes of the calls revealed that his pleas for help were not taken seriously, and the operators are being charged with willful neglect of duty.

Oakland County Prosecutor Kym Worthy said the first operator failed to treat the call as an emergency, and didn't send a police car to the house until 3 hours later.

A second operator told Robert to stop playing around.

Cheryl Turner died from complications of an enlarged heart in her apartment.

According to Prosecutor Worthy, "There were many employment regulations that were violated by both of these operators. They did not follow proper protocol. The police were not sent for after the first call, and police were only sent after the second call 3 hours later, because she wanted to teach the child a lesson. She sent the police over there just so they could reprimand the child for making a prank call."

Willful neglect of duty carries the penalty of a 1 year misdemeanor, and both of the 911 operators have also been given suspension time.

Stay tuned to 7 Action News for more information as it becomes available

Girl's death shocks, baffles Kids never played outside -- neighbors

FLINT

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Wednesday, June 07, 2006

By Kristin Longley and Kim Crawford

JOURNAL STAFF WRITERS

FLINT - Glancing at her neighbors' home where a 5-year-old girl died Saturday under "deplorable" conditions, Teresa Youmans held her head in her hands and said she wishes she had known something was wrong.

But Youmans and other neighbors said they couldn't have prevented Rose Kelly from dying in her N. Franklin Avenue home because they didn't know how she and her siblings were faring. The children never played outside.

"I feel bad because I didn't know what was happening," said Youmans, who lives two houses down. "I could have called social services or something. But they were never around, never outside."

Veteran police officers say they were shaken by the conditions at the house where Rose lived with her mother and father, Michelle L. Bowen, 31, and Jeffery C. Kelly, 30, and three siblings. Garbage was stored in cupboards, dog feces soiled the home, cockroaches crawled over dishes and the stove, fleas jumped around the floor and furniture, and lice infested the house.

"I haven't seen anything like this in over 20 years of being a police officer," said Flint police Lt. Tim P. Johnson, who responded on Saturday.

Johnson said he was most struck that Rose's hair was moving even though she was dead because of the large numbers of lice in it.

Police hadn't received the results of an autopsy as of Tuesday. Bowen, who neighbors said works at the Chuck E. Cheese's restaurant on Miller Road in Flint Township, told police and state Child Protective Services caseworkers that Rose became sick last week.

Bowen told authorities that even though Rose's condition worsened, she didn't call a doctor because she knew CPS would take the four children due to home conditions and because at least two, Rose and her younger sister, had serious head lice infestations.

Caseworkers charged that it appeared Rose had been dead for hours before her parents called 911 on Saturday.

"How does she (Bowen) just let her die?" Youmans said, shock and frustration evident in her voice. "When kids are sick, you take them to the doctor. Especially when they're as sick as that little girl."

Neighbors said that even though Bowen and Kelly often would sit outside with friends, the children - Rose, her 6-year-old brother, 2-year-old sister and 10-year-old half-sister - stayed inside and peered out of the windows. Many times they were in their underwear, even in winter, neighbors said.

"I've got three children who never want to stay inside," Youmans said. "It's just strange that she kept them in the house like that."

Robin Bedard, who lives across the street from the home, said she saw the two older children only when they were on their way to school. She never saw the youngest child or Rose, who neighbors said they didn't think went to school.

The older children looked normal and healthy, Bedard said.

"That's what befuddles me," Bedard said. "For them to live that way in filth and for no one to know what happened."

Weeds in the yard of the brown-sided home are waist-high, and trash litters the bushes and the backyard. Youmans said Kelly stayed home with the children while Bowen worked.

Employees at Chuck E. Cheese's declined to comment.

Rose's siblings were taken from their parents after a court hearing Monday and temporarily placed with relatives.

According to a neglect petition filed against Bowen and Kelly by CPS, the two had been ordered to take parenting classes in 2004 and receive "prevention services" in 2005 after it was alleged that Rose's brother had been "medically neglected" late in 2003.

Those classes, to teach parents skills such as how keep their homes clean, are part of efforts that agencies must do by law to try to keep families intact, said Sheryl Thompson, the new director of the Genesee County Department of Human Services.

"We're required by federal law to make reasonable efforts to keep families together," Thompson said.

While Thompson said she couldn't address the specifics of Rose's case because of confidentiality requirements, she noted that many local families have completed parenting classes successfully and received prevention services, averting the need for removal of their children by preventing neglect or abuse.

"There are lots of cases where allegations are made against parents that don't result in abuse or neglect petitions because we can get them the help and the services they need," Thompson said.

Keeping kids safe, families together a balancing act

GENESEE COUNTY

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION
Wednesday, June 07, 2006

By Ron Fonger
rfonger@flintjournal.com • 810.766.6317

GENESEE COUNTY - When 5-year-old Rose Kelly died Saturday in her own home, it wasn't the first time a local child has died in a place she should have been safe.

Rose died after her parents, Michelle L. Bowen, 31, and Jeffery C. Kelly, 30, did not take her to see a doctor after she fell ill last week, according to state Child Protective Services workers.

Her cause of death has not been determined, but police and social workers say Bowen said she did not take her daughter to the doctor because she feared state workers would take her children because of the squalid condition of her Flint home.

It's another frustrating case for child advocates who say the system has the hard job of balancing the desire to keep families together with the need to keep children safe.

Vera Rison, a member of the county Department of Human Services oversight board, said officials will want to know details about what caseworkers found when they previously had contact with Bowen and Kelly.

State officials had told the parents in 2004 and 2005 to participate in parenting classes and prevention services.

"If we need to, we will ask for a special meeting," Rison said. "I know this board will want to know what part we played" before the death.

DHS is responsible for investigating reports of suspected child abuse and neglect.

Pam Morrison of the Consortium on Child Abuse and Neglect said caseworkers do a good job of visiting homes after complaints are made to DHS.

The job isn't as simple as trying to terminate parental rights because of a messy house, Morrison said, and when officials realize troubles run deeper, it can be too late.

The consortium's Web site says children and parents are at risk now more than ever because of the breakdown of family structure and a lack of community involvement and support.

Genesee County Prosecutor David Leyton agreed that too many parents aren't ready for the responsibility, causing tragedies like child abuse and deaths.

"We have too many people having children who are not prepared to care for them," Leyton said. "It's an enormous societal problem not confined to Flint."

Rison said too many mothers work at low-paying jobs to protect benefits in Michigan, making their children more susceptible to abuse and neglect.

"We have a lot of young women trusting their babies with the wrong people," Rison said.

QUICK TAKE

Children in danger

Some recent cases in which Genesee County children have died in their own homes:

□ NOV. 18, 1998: Derrious "Pib" Kemp, 3, died in Flint after suffering a broken neck, bruises and abrasions from head to toe. The boy had been tortured by his mother's boyfriend after wetting the bed.

□ MAY 4, 2000: Dustin Ray Deaton-Hambey, 2, died in his mother's Mt.

Morris home
after she
overdosed him
with
antidepressants.
The boy had been
removed from
home previously
and placed in
foster care before
being returned to
his mother.

□ JUNE 30,
2002: Cody A.
Schmidt, 11
months, died in
Flint after his
mother banged
his head against a
wall to stop him
from crying. She
had already had
three other
children removed
from her home.

□ AUG. 26,
2003: Eight-
month old Shelby
M. Murphy died
in Flint after she
was dropped by
her 8-year-old
brother, who had
been left to care
for her.

Bay City Times

Wednesday, June 07, 2006

Yost sentenced to life in prison

A judge on Tuesday sentenced Donna A. Yost to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

The sentence was mandatory after a jury convicted Yost in April of first-degree felony murder and second-degree murder for the 1999 death of her daughter, Monique, 7, at the family's Bay City rental home.

Yost's defense attorney, Edward M. Czuprynski, said his client intends to appeal the conviction.

The courtroom of Bay County Circuit Judge William J. Caprathe was crowded with Yost's family and friends as well as court employees, social workers and detectives.

Prosecution witnesses testified at trial the Monique died of an acute overdose of an anti-depressant medication. Prosecutors theorized that Yost, 46, killed Monique because she was angry that the child was disobedient and also that they feared that she would tell investigators about alleged sexual abuse in the home.

The conclusion of the trial and the sentencing can be viewed Wednesday on Court TV, Charter cable 69.

Yost proclaims innocence as judge gives her life in prison

Wednesday, June 07, 2006

By CRYSTAL HARMON
BAY CITY TIMES WRITER

Donna A. Yost knew there was nothing she could say to prevent being sentenced to life in prison, but she took the opportunity to make a statement inside the packed courtroom on Tuesday.

"Your honor, I just wanted to let you know that I said from the beginning I'm innocent and I still am," Yost said in a quavering voice. "I hope to come back on appeal and prove you guys wrong. ... I hope you guys see it. ... The prosecutor is so wrong. My kids were - are - my world."

Bay County Circuit Judge William J. Caprathe then pronounced the mandatory life sentence, giving Yost, 46, credit for 278 days served, and informed her of her appeal rights before a deputy led her back to jail.

"We love you, Donna," one of her friends yelled out from the galley.

Yost will be transported to the Scott Correctional Facility in Plymouth, most likely today, where, barring a successful appeal, she will remain for the rest of her life.

A jury convicted Yost in April of first-degree felony murder and second-degree murder for the 1999 death of her daughter, Monique, 7, at the family's Bay City rental home. The girl died of a fatal dose of antidepressant medication that had been prescribed to her for bed-wetting, according to the medical examiner who conducted her autopsy.

Among the crowd in the courtroom for the sentencing were three of the jurors, who had sat through weeks of testimony before deliberating for several hours to reach a verdict.

"I think we made the right decision," said one, declining to give her name. "It was hard, but it was the right thing, and I came here today to see it through to the end."

Yost's defense attorney, Edward M. Czuprynski, said his client intends to appeal the conviction. The Michigan court system will assign an appeals attorney to Yost once she files paperwork, and Czuprynski said that a variety of problems with the trial could yield grounds for a successful appeal.

He said prosecutors "had to resort to tugging the emotional chains" not only during the trial, but in statements made before the sentencing. He also claims that Caprathe prevented him from presenting certain evidence and allowed prosecutors to elicit improper testimony at trial.

As no family members came forward to offer a victim's impact statement on behalf of Monique, Chief Assistant Kurt Asbury gave a statement he said hoped would speak for her.

"I stand before you not just as a prosecutor but as an advocate of a little girl," he said. "Having a child is one of God's blessings. A mother is supposed to nurture, to be there to wipe away the tears...but the mother standing before you stood there and watched as the poisonous concoction that she'd whipped up robbed her (Monique) of her last breath of air."

Asbury said Yost "couldn't control what (Monique) was doing or what she might say, so she silenced her forever."

Prosecutors had planned to interview Monique on Oct. 11, 1999, about allegations of sexual abuse of Monique by a teenage family friend. Prosecutors say Yost was afraid that other sexual abuse within the home might come to light. They say that may have been Yost's motive for killing Monique.

Testimony at the trial revealed that Yost had been sexually assaulted at age 3 by a 10-year-old girl and had an ongoing problem with bed-wetting, vaginal infections, and acting out sexually at school and with other children. Testimony also revealed that child protective workers had a thick file on the Yost family dating back more than 20 years with several allegations of other drug overdoses, physical violence and improper restraining of Monique and her siblings.

Retired child-protective services worker Jane Smith attended the sentencing on Tuesday and said that while the "Families First" approach to child welfare was often effective, in the case of the Yost family, more drastic measures were called for. Social service workers provided homemaking consultants, respite workers to take the Yost children for recreational outings and weekends, counseling, food stamps, cash assistance and medical insurance to the Yosts.

"In retrospect, those children should have been removed from that home years ago," Smith said.

Kathy Tomlinson, the former "respite worker" that now has custody of Monique's older brother, Josh, 16, said the boy is traumatized by losing his sister and his mother as well as the publicity surrounding the case. It's being aired on Court TV (Charter Channel 69) this week and will wrap up today.

"It's very rough for a boy that age," said Tomlinson, of Pinconning. "He went to visit his mom a week ago and it's just very traumatic for a kid."

Bay County Prosecutor Joseph K. Sheeran said that justice was a long time coming, but has, in this case, been served. He said the welfare system isn't at fault in Monique's death.

"She was primarily failed by her mother," he said.

06/06/2006

News in brief

1996 incident prompts sexual assault charge

FROM STAFF REPORTS

TRAVERSE CITY — A Cadillac man is charged with sexual assault after an alleged incident involving an underage girl.

Paul R. Leffel, 54, is charged with first-degree criminal sexual conduct with a person under 13 years old.

The victim told police that when she was living in Traverse City in January 1996, Leffel performed a sex act with her, according to a criminal complaint filed in 86th District Court.

The felony charge carries a maximum penalty of life in prison.

Trucker faces charges in child-porn case

Wednesday, June 07, 2006

By John S. Hausman

MUSKEGON CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

A Grand Rapids truck driver has been charged with possession of child pornography in Muskegon County after hundreds of downloaded photographs -- many placed in book-like albums to illustrate his own "fantasy story" writings -- were found in two Fruitport Township storage units he rented but failed to pay for.

State Police detectives are continuing to investigate, and more charges in other jurisdictions might come later.

Daniel Charles Dunn, 51, of 3849 Vail was arraigned Monday before visiting 60th District Judge Robert A. Benson on three counts of possessing child sexually abusive material, a felony punishable by up to four years in prison.

Dunn also was charged with two counts of possessing a firearm while committing a felony, which could tack an additional two years of prison time onto any other sentence he receives if convicted. That's because the locker he rented at 2244 S. Mill Iron also contained two revolvers.

Dunn posted 10 percent of \$10,000 bond. Benson scheduled a preliminary examination for June 15.

Detectives from the State Police Grand Haven post arrested Dunn on Saturday as part of an ongoing investigation launched after the pornography was discovered. The owners of the storage business auctioned off the lockers' contents -- sight unseen -- after Dunn failed to pay the rent, police said. After the Mason County citizen who bought the contents found the child porn, he notified officers at the state police Hart post, who alerted the Grand Haven investigators.

"It's just hundreds of images of children involved in sex acts, things like that, most of which was probably downloaded from the Internet," said Detective Sgt. Gary Miles. "We're still investigating."

The investigation is in the early stages and could involve charges in multiple jurisdictions, including the possibility of federal charges, Miles said.

Miles said investigators also found a large quantity of additional Internet-generated child porn on computer compact disks stored in a semitrailer, parked in Allegan County, that Dunn drove around the United States for a trucking company based there.

Police also seized computers to which Dunn had access. Experts will examine them to try to identify sources for the material, and to see if they can identify those involved in distributing it.

Authorities said Dunn admitted the child-sex material belonged to him.

"He's been interviewed and made some confessions," Miles said.

Brett Gardner, Muskegon County's chief assistant prosecutor, said the trucker in a Saturday follow-up interview with police -- done at the request of the prosecutor's office - admitted downloading the material from computers in Ionia County and in Tennessee.

Dunn's arrest followed that interview.

Gardner praised the work of state police in untangling the case after the initial tip. "It was excellent police work."

Even locating Dunn proved a challenge for police. Miles said the man changed jobs after the investigation began, and his movement around the country made him difficult to track.

Later charges in other jurisdictions might include "making" child pornography, a 20-year felony in Michigan. The state court of appeals ruled earlier this year in another pending Muskegon County case -- that of former Egelston Township Treasurer Brian Lee Hill -- that printing child porn from the Internet does constitute the more serious crime. However, investigators do not believe Dunn downloaded any of the material in Muskegon County.

Miles said investigators have not found any evidence that Dunn himself committed sex acts with children or took illegal photographs, but the investigation is still ongoing.

Dunn's attorney, Jeffrey P. West of Muskegon, could not be reached for comment Tuesday.

Child porn found in lockers

Wednesday, June 07, 2006

Grand Rapids Press News Service

MUSKEGON COUNTY -- A Grand Rapids-area man faces child pornography charges after hundreds of photographs were discovered in two Fruitport Township storage units he rented but failed to pay for, police said.

The storage business owners auctioned off the lockers' contents -- sight unseen -- after Daniel Charles Dunn, 51, failed to pay the rent, police said.

The man who bought the contents called police after finding the child pornography, police said.

"It's just hundreds of images of children involved in sex acts, things like that, most of which was probably downloaded from the Internet," state police Detective Sgt. Gary Miles said.

Dunn, whose last known address is in Alpine Township, will face a hearing June 15 in 60th District Court to determine whether he should face trial on three counts of possessing child sexually abusive material, punishable by up to four years in prison.

Dunn also was charged with two counts of possessing a firearm while committing a felony after two revolvers were found in the locker he rented at 2244 S. Mill Iron. Dunn posted \$1,000 of his \$10,000 bond.

Michigan State Police detectives from Grand Haven arrested Dunn on Saturday.

The investigation is still in its early stages and could involve federal charges, Miles said.

Many of the images were in albums and appeared to illustrate "fantasy story" writings, police said.

Miles said investigators also found Internet-generated child porn on computer CDs stored in a semitrailer parked in Allegan County that Dunn drove for a trucking company.

Muskegon County Chief Assistant Prosecutor Brett Gardner said Dunn admitted downloading the material from computers in Ionia County and Tennessee. Dunn was arrested after that interview.

Dunn's attorney, Jeffrey P. West, of Muskegon, could not be reached for comment Tuesday.

Sentence for Short Sex Offender Draws Fire

By SCOTT BAUER

The Associated Press

Friday, May 26, 2006; 10:50 AM

LINCOLN, Neb. -- A judge's decision to sentence a 5-foot-1 man to probation instead of prison for sexually assaulting a child has angered crime victim advocates who say the punishment sends the wrong message.

But supporters of short people say it's about time someone recognizes the unique challenges they face.

Cheyenne County District Judge Kristine Cecava issued the sentence Tuesday. She told Richard W. Thompson that his crimes deserved a long prison sentence but that he was too small to survive in a state prison.

Though he could have been sentenced to 10 years behind bars, he ended up with 10 years of probation instead. On Thursday, the state's attorney general, Jon Bruning, promised to appeal within two weeks, calling the sentence far too lenient.

"I'm concerned about the message this sends to victims and perpetrators," said Marla Sohl with the Nebraska Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Coalition, adding that it shows more concern is being placed on the criminal and his safety in prison than the victim.

But Joe Mangano, secretary of the National Organization of Short Statured Adults, agreed with the judge's assessment that Thompson would face dangers while in prison because of his height.

"I'm assuming a short inmate would have a much more difficult time than a large inmate," said Mangano, who is 5 feet 4 inches tall. "It's good to see somebody looking out for someone who is a short person."

Thompson, 50, had sexual contact over a couple of months last year with a 12-year-old girl, said Sidney Police Chief Larry Cox. He was sentenced on two felony sexual assault charges.

As part of the probation, he will be electronically monitored for the first four months and was told never to be alone with someone under age 18 or date or live with a woman whose children were under 18. He was also ordered to get rid of his pornography.

Thompson's attorney, Donald Miller, had no comment on the ruling. Cheyenne County Attorney Paul Schaub, who prosecuted the case, did not return a call seeking comment. Cecava did not return a message seeking comment.

The judge's reasoning confounded Amy Miller, legal director for the Nebraska chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union.

"I have never heard of anything like this before," she said.

No one has ever come to the ACLU to complain of height discrimination, she said. And using Thompson's height as a reason to avoid sending him to prison is surprising, because neither the U.S. nor state constitution provides protections based on physical stature, she said.

A spokesman for the prison system said Thompson's height would not put him at risk among the state's 4,400 inmates. There are protections available in prison to help inmates who feel threatened, prison spokesman Steve King said, but to his knowledge, no one has ever taken advantage of them based on fears related to their height.

"He's not the shortest guy we have in prison," King said. "We've got some short guys that are as tough as nails. We've got people from all ages, physical stature of all sizes, in general population."

State Sen. Ernie Chambers, a longtime critic of judges, said he was baffled by the sentence.

"If shortness is an excuse and protection from going to prison, short people ought to rob banks and do everything else they would wind up going to prison for," Chambers said. "We're talking here about a crime committed against a child, and shortness is not a defense."

On the Net:

Nebraska Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Coalition:

<http://www.ndvsac.org>

National Organization of Short Statured Adults:

<http://www.nossaonline.org/nossa.html>

Short Support: <http://shortsupport.org/index.html>

June 6, 2006

COX ANNOUNCES \$26 MILLION IN CHILD SUPPORT COLLECTIONS

In Michigan more than \$26 million has been collected in back due child support during the three years since the state's top lawyer stepped up collection efforts, Attorney General Mike Cox announced Tuesday.

In announcing what he called "a good news story" about a "government program that actually works," Mr. Cox touted the work of his office's child support division, which was created in 2003 to enforce support orders by tracking down "deadbeat" parents and prosecuting them for failure to pay.

"First and foremost, this is much needed support going directly to the children and custodial parents who rely on this money," Mr. Cox said. "It is impossible to calculate how important this is to families that are struggling to make ends meet."

The attorney general said the program, which has helped over 3,000 children, cost the state about \$2 million to operate but all but about \$10,600 was returned to the state with fees paid by non-custodial parents.

"This program has literally paid for itself," Mr. Cox said, emphasizing that his office's efforts have worked because he has "sent a clear message to parents that they have an obligation to support their children."

Nearly 2,000 people have been arrested for failure to pay, with 409 having been extradited from other states, which resulted in 1,103 convictions.

Along with figures to prove the program's success, the attorney general also brought with him three mothers from around the state who spoke about their fight to collect support for their children and the help the child support division offered to them.

One Holt woman battled the system for over a decade, contending with an out of state father who managed to avoid paying for 15 years; that is, she said, until the attorney general's office stepped up and had her ex arrested, at which time he paid a lump sum against his arrearages and now consistently pays his support.

Another woman called the attorney general investigator who worked on her case her "guardian angel" because she never thought she'd see the money owed to her for the support of her now 26-year-old daughter.

Although his office can't help all of the approximately 600,000 children covered under child support orders, Mr. Cox called the threat of arrest for non-payment "a legitimate deterrent effect," making the program effective even for those who aren't served directly.

MICHIGAN

Deadbeat parents pay state millions

June 7, 2006

BY DAWSON BELL
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Attorney General Mike Cox announced Tuesday that his office collected more than \$26 million in overdue child support from noncustodial parents since April 2003.

The collections, which he credited to the Child Support Division he added to the office early in his term, have resulted in payments of \$23.7 million to the parents of more than 3,000 kids, Cox said at a Lansing news conference.

The rest of the money went to administer the program.

He was joined by the mothers of three children who said they struggled for years to locate and extract payment from ex-spouses before the program was reformed.

Cox said the announcement is "a good-news story ... about government doing what it's supposed to do."

The child support collection effort has been Cox's signature issue since he succeeded former Attorney General Jennifer Granholm in January 2003.

Cox said Tuesday that stepped-up enforcement, which included felony prosecution and jail time for some parents behind on their payments, has resulted in better compliance across the board.

Since 2003, 1,985 noncustodial parents have been arrested and 409 extradited to Michigan, Cox said. All of them have pleaded guilty, no contest or been found guilty at trial, he said.

Contact DAWSON BELL at 313-222-6604 or dbell@freepress.com.

More Than \$26 Million Collected

MIRS, Tuesday, June 6, 2006

Attorney General Mike **COX** announced today that the Child Support Division of his office has collected more than \$26 million in child support.

The division was started by Cox in 2003 and has collected a total of \$26 million in child support. According to officials, a total of 3,007 children have received the money. The largest payment received was \$250,000 in a 2004 Kent County case.

"First and foremost, this is much needed support going directly to the children and custodial parents who rely on this money," Cox said. "More than 3,000 children have benefited from this program. It is impossible to calculate how important this is to families that are struggling to make ends meet."

Millions Collected In Child Support

Program Surpassed Goals

POSTED: 6:36 pm EDT June 6, 2006

Michigan Attorney General Mike Cox's office has collected more than \$26 million in child support since 2003.

Cox said his Child Support Division surpassed his goal of collecting \$25 million in his first term, which will expire at the end of this year.

The division has helped more than 3,000 children.

Cox said his program focuses on prosecuting parents who have the ability to pay child support but choose not to.

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Wednesday, June 07, 2006

School for at-risk kids in jeopardy County rejects contract with Waterford district, but Children's Village talks will continue.

Maureen Feighan / The Detroit News

PONTIAC -- A contract that calls for the Waterford School District to teach detainees at Oakland County's juvenile detention facility is in limbo.

The Oakland County Board of Commissioners' general government committee Monday rejected a three-year contract with the Waterford district to provide educational services to Children's Village detainees.

The contract would require the county to pay \$490,000 a year above the roughly \$11,000 per student in state funding Waterford already receives for each detainee.

Several commissioners said departments across Oakland County are being asked to tighten their belts, and the district needs to do so also.

A special meeting to discuss the \$2.5 million contract and potential cuts is set for June 12 at the county's offices.

"This is a fat budget," said Commissioner Mattie Hatchett, D-Pontiac.

"We need to cut some of the fat and get down to the lean."

But what will be cut are services and programs that the county has asked Waterford to provide to the roughly 1,200 children who pass through Children's Village each year, said Assistant Superintendent Tom Wiseman.

The village shelters at-risk children from birth to age 17 and is also a juvenile correctional facility.

One item potentially on the chopping block is summer school, which costs approximately \$57,000 to provide.

Under state law, Waterford is required to teach the pupils at Children's Village because the facility is within the district's boundaries. Student detainees range in age from 5-18.

Wiseman said the county subsidized Waterford's budget at Children's Village with \$620,000 last year.

He said the district was able to ask for less this year because of increases in state aid.

Tom Gordon, the county's director of human services, said the detainees at Children's Village are already "damaged," and the county has an obligation to provide them with the proper services no matter the cost.

The current contract expires June 30.

You can reach Maureen Feighan at (248) 647-7416 or mfeighan@detnews.com.

New phone service to offer senior citizens long-term care information

Wednesday, June 07, 2006

By Jeff Alexander

MUSKEGON CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

Senior citizens in West Michigan will soon be able to call one telephone number for information about long-term medical care.

Gov. Jennifer Granholm has awarded a \$9.1 million grant to establish what amounts to a help-line for senior citizens needing information on nursing homes, assisted living centers and other types of long-term care.

Senior Resources, Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan and HHS Health Options Inc. in Grand Rapids will use the grant to establish a new nonprofit entity to operate the help-line, called a Single Point of Entry Demonstration Site.

We want it to be easier for older adults to find long-term care in the setting of their choice, whether that might be in a nursing home, assisted living, or in their own homes," said Dee Scott, executive director of Senior Resources in Muskegon.

"Decisions on long-term care can be overwhelming and people need a trusted information source that can help them select where and how they receive services," Scott said.

The West Michigan program will cover Allegan, Ionia, Kent, Lake, Mason, Mecosta, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, Osceola and Ottawa counties.

The grant will create 62 jobs -- specially trained service personnel who field questions from the public -- and the help-line should be in operation later this summer, local officials said.

Grants were awarded for three similar projects in Detroit, southwest Michigan and the Upper Peninsula. Once the help-line is activated, people will be able to access it by dialing 211.

The grants will fund the help-line demonstration projects for 27 months. Then it will be up to the governor to decide whether to make the help-lines permanent.

With more baby boomers reaching retirement age, and the state's Medicaid budget creaking from rising costs, the governor is looking for ways to reduce the cost of long-term care for senior citizens, said Maggie Jensen, program development director for Senior Resources of West Michigan.

Jensen said the pilot project will give senior assistance agencies a chance to determine whether the help-line makes it easier for senior citizens to find information about long-term care and how to pay for those services.

"As the baby boomer generation ages, there will be a huge demand for this type of service," Jensen said.

State officials said a task force concluded that Michigan's long term-care policies were outdated and inefficient. The task force recommended creating a single point of entry to help senior citizens find quality, affordable care.

Other states have demonstrated that providing senior citizens with information on the range of long-term care services can reduce Medicaid expenses by increasing the number of people who receive less expensive care in their own homes, Jensen said.

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Citizenship proof required Medicaid

Marquette Mining Journal

WASHINGTON (AP) — Tens of millions of low-income Americans will soon have to show their birth certificates or U.S. passports if they want to obtain health care through their state Medicaid programs.

The requirement that beneficiaries provide proof of citizenship goes into effect July 1. It's designed to root out cases of illegal immigrants getting their health care paid for by the government.

Health analysts say they fear the provision could prevent some citizens from getting health care.

Advocacy groups for the homeless and mentally ill have asked the Bush administration to presume that beneficiaries seeking care are eligible for the health insurance program for the poor. Then, they would be given time to get the necessary documents.

"They may not have kept the best records, particularly those with serious mental health disorders," said Kirsten Beronio, senior director of government affairs for the National Mental Health Association. "For them, there needs to be some accommodations made that other types of records could be used."

Mark McClellan, administrator for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, said he was sensitive to the concerns cited by various consumer groups. He said the agency was crafting a process for exceptions.

"We want to provide a reasonable amount of leeway," McClellan said. "Not everyone, at least in a timely way, can produce one of the statutory documents. We do expect that the vast majority of people will have little difficulty given enough time. We want to make sure we have processes that can work for others."

He did not provide specifics about how much time beneficiaries may be given to gather documents, or what other types of documents might be allowed. He said such guidance will be issued to the states soon.

"The challenge in the Medicaid program is making sure the dollars go where they're intended to go without imposing any undue burdens on states and beneficiaries," McClellan said. "That's what we're looking for here."

The citizenship requirement was attached to a bill that President Bush signed into law in February spelling out \$35 billion in spending cuts over a five-year period. Much of the focus was on slowing the growth in Medicaid.

The provision will save federal taxpayers an estimated \$220 million over the next five years, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

Last year, the inspector general for the Department of Health and Human Services found that a majority of states don't verify claims of U.S. citizenship by those seeking Medicaid. The practice creates the potential for illegal immigrants to access the health care program.

The inspector general's report did not address to what extent there is a problem with illegal immigrants accessing Medicaid, only that the potential exists.

Federal law says a person must be a citizen to receive Medicaid benefits. However, emergency care cannot be denied.

States now can accept a signed declaration as proof of U.S. citizenship. Forty-six states do.

Only Montana, New York, New Hampshire and Texas require applicants to submit documents verifying citizenship.

The bill required that Medicaid applicants show a birth certificate or U.S. passport but gives the administration leeway in saying other documents could be acceptable. An example might be a sworn affidavit that describes why documentary evidence does not exist or cannot be obtained.

Directors of community health centers, which specialize in helping the poor access health care, have asked the administration to accept as proof of citizenship report cards, voter registration cards, tribal documents and military ID cards.

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a liberal think tank, said disaster victims and elderly African-Americans may have difficulty accessing records such as birth certificates. Several black lawmakers have signed onto bills that would repeal the proof of citizenship requirement for participating in Medicaid.

The group said many elderly blacks were born in a time when racial discrimination in hospital admissions kept their mothers from giving birth at hospitals, so their births often were not officially registered. The center conducted a survey showing 9 percent of black adults reported they lack a passport or birth certificate, compared to 5.7 percent of all adults surveyed.

The new requirement will apply to all Medicaid applications submitted after July 1, as well as all applications to renew Medicaid coverage.

On the Net:

Office of the inspector general for the Department of Health and Human Services:

<http://oig.hhs.gov/>

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities: **<http://www.cbpp.org/4-20-06health.htm>**

AP-CS-06-05-06 1810EDT

Parolee pleads guilty in death of his father

Wednesday, June 07, 2006

Jackson Citizen Patriot Staff and wire reports

A Hillsdale County man accused of killing his father during an alcohol-fueled argument at their mobile home pleaded guilty to second-degree murder, the Hillsdale County prosecutor said.

Jonathan A. Boggs, 28, choked his father, Michael A. Boggs, until he was unconscious, then shot him twice in the head, authorities say. He pleaded guilty Friday and faces sentencing July 24 by Circuit Judge Michael Smith.

The body of Michael Boggs, 55, was discovered March 29 in a shallow grave near his home in Adams Township.

The elder Boggs was reported missing a few days earlier by a relative in the Detroit area. Investigators determined the elder Boggs was last seen Saturday night by his son.

Authorities searched two days, even asking the National Guard to conduct an aerial search.

After the body was discovered, police arrested Jonathon Boggs. He admitted to the killing shortly after his arrest, authorities have said. He told police he and his father argued about his lack of a job.

Jonathan Boggs was awaiting trial next week on charges of murder, using a firearm in a felony and possession of a firearm by a felon. Had he been tried and convicted of first-degree murder, he would have received an automatic sentence of life in prison without parole. Second-degree murder carries a sentence of up to life.

County Prosecutor Neal Brady said because Boggs is a habitual offender, he probably will get at least 50 years.

"He is going to be sentenced to prison for essentially the rest of his life," Brady said.

Boggs was paroled from prison in December 2004, after serving more than three years for felonious assault. He had prior convictions for home invasion and firing a weapon toward a building.

New Campaign Shows Progress for Homeless

By ERIK ECKHOLM
The New York Times

Published: June 7, 2006

DENVER — Arthur Sena spent years living in a hole that he had dug near the railroad tracks. He would probably still be there, defying offers of help from social workers and using cardboard to ward off the chill, if Denver had not adopted a radical strategy of putting homeless people into apartments of their own, no strings attached.

The "housing first" policy that this city adopted last year is part of an accelerating national movement that has reduced the numbers of the chronically homeless — the single, troubled men and women who spend years in the streets and shelters — in more than 20 cities.

In this campaign, promoted by a little-known office of the Bush administration, 219 cities, at last count, have started ambitious 10-year plans to end chronic homelessness.

The cities include New York, which is stepping up efforts to house the estimated nearly 4,000 people huddling on sidewalks or sleeping in parks, and Henderson, N.C., population 17,000, which recently counted 91 homeless people, 14 of them chronic cases.

Many of the early starters are reporting turnarounds. In Philadelphia, street dwellers have declined 60 percent over five years. In San Francisco, the number of the chronic homeless is down 28 percent in two years, in Dallas 26 percent and in Raleigh-Durham, N.C., 15 percent.

If it is not always clear who will pay for the plans, the burst of effort has buoyed a field long accustomed to futility.

"I've sensed a new energy in city halls and state houses around the issue of ending homelessness," said Robert V. Hess, who just took over as homeless services commissioner in New York City after years of similar work in Philadelphia. "This is unprecedented in my lifetime."

Part of the credit, Mr. Hess and others said, goes to Philip F. Mangano, a Bush appointee who has spent five years visiting every mayor and governor he can, brandishing successful examples, cost-benefit studies and his own messianic fervor along with modest amounts of federal money.

"We're conspiring to undo what we'd been told for so many years, that this was an intractable issue," Mr. Mangano told 150 mayors, state and city officials and private leaders here in May. They were gathered for the first "national leadership summit," sponsored by the once-dormant office that Mr. Mangano leads, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness.

Wherever he goes, Mr. Mangano, 58, who was director of the Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance, emphasizes that it is cheaper to put the chronically homeless right into apartments, and provide medical and addiction treatments there, than to watch them cycle endlessly through shelters, soup kitchens, emergency rooms, detoxification centers and jails.

"Cost-benefit analysis may be the new expression of compassion in our communities," he said at the Denver meeting.

Typically, people in such programs are put into sparsely furnished apartments free. Soon after, as they are helped into jobs or sign up for disability or other government benefits, they are required to pay modest rents.

Outreach workers had spent months persuading Mr. Sena, 69, to move to an efficiency apartment downtown. He finally did in 2005, after injuring an arm. His room still has bare walls, and Mr. Sena, who remarkably retains a head of dark hair, has not lost his crustiness.

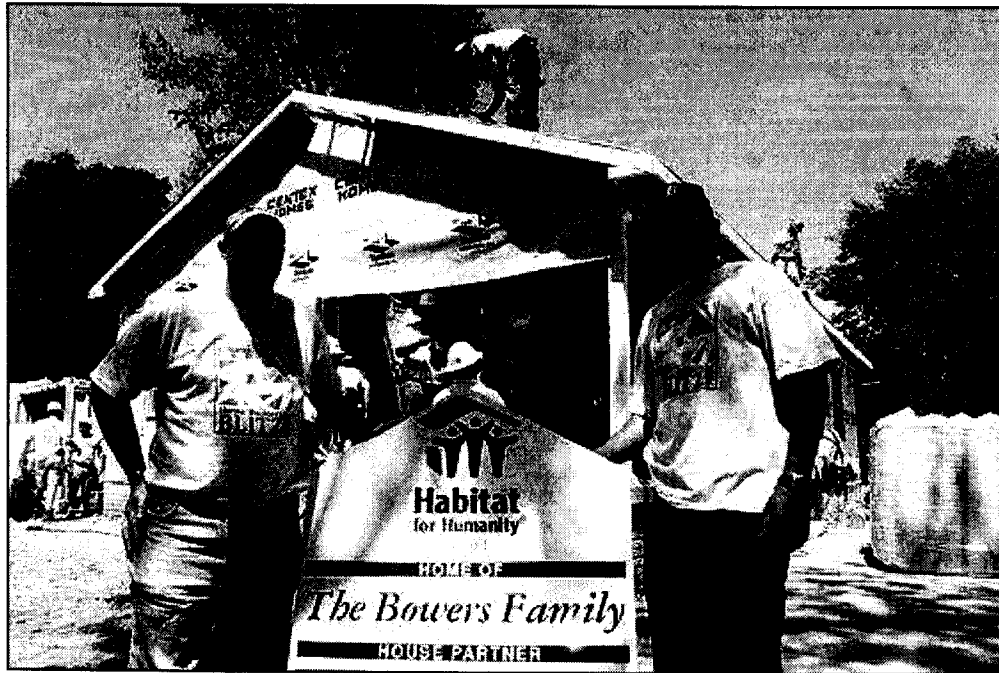
"I never had any alcohol addiction," he told a visitor. "I just copped a little shot now and then. As a matter of fact, I was just heading out right now to get a half pint. It's the only thing that helps the pain in my arm."

Mr. Sena refused to disclose more about his history or use of public services. But in a study here, officials found that 25 men were taken into emergency detoxification centers for an average of 80 nights each in one year, at a total cost of \$772,000. Officials have

found that they can provide housing and most medical and other services for about \$15,000 a year per person.

The growing focus on housing the chronically homeless was driven, many officials said, by a study in 1998 by Prof. Dennis P. Culhane, a sociologist at the University of Pennsylvania. Professor Culhane showed that a vast majority of people staying in shelters did so briefly and got on with their lives and that 10 percent were in and out repeatedly for years, accounting for half of total bed use.

Wednesday, June 07, 2006



W. Edwin Smith / The Detroit News

Tim Hudson of Habitat for Humanity, left, pauses with Andrew Bowers at the Tillman Street site of Bowers' new house, one of four being built in Detroit. Four others are going up in Pontiac and Roseville this week.

Building blitz to house eight Metro families Builders, volunteers team for week as part of Habitat for Humanity's national 450-home task.

Mark Hicks / The Detroit News

DETROIT -- Charlie and Nekol Anderson sighed in amazement as they scoped out 3566 Tillman St. on Monday afternoon.

As soft sunlight streamed through the windows of their soon-to-be-completed first home, the couple stepped past small sawdust piles and wood shavings to view where they plan to place a kitchen table.

"Once the walls go up," said Nekol Anderson, 36, a direct care worker from Detroit, "it's on for decorating!"

While most new homeowners typically wait several months to witness their dream evolve from blueprint to completion, the Andersons will wait only five days. Their 1,100-square-foot, ranch-style home will be completed by Friday -- as will seven other homes in Metro Detroit built as part of the week-long 2006 Builders Blitz, which launched Monday.

The project, coordinated by Habitat for Humanity and the Building Industry Association, will produce some 450 homes in more than 150 cities nationwide for low-income families.

In the local effort, headed by the Building Industry Association of Southeastern Michigan's Charitable & Educational Foundation and the Detroit, Macomb and Oakland chapters of Habitat for Humanity, more than 100 builders and volunteers from more than 16 companies will erect four homes in Detroit, two in Pontiac and two in Roseville.

Electricians, carpenters and other professionals donated labor and materials.

"It's good to give back," said John Scaccia, president of Auburn Hills-based Scaccia Building Co.

The sound of flurried hammering, scraping and sanding saturated the warm air Tuesday afternoon as crews worked on the Tillman Street houses.

One house was erected in 24 hours by Southfield-based Centex Homes.

"We're changing lives," said Rob Corbin of Centex.

The Andersons are eagerly anticipating moving into their first home with their two children, Charlie, 2, and Carolyn, 10.

Charlie Anderson grinned after observing the ensuing construction Monday afternoon. The builders and volunteers, he said, were "the dream team."

"It's phenomenal."

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Habitat homes going up fast

Stephanie Antonian Rutherford
The Battle Creek Enquirer

From sunrise until sunset this week, the corner of Jackson and Kendall streets is alive with the ruckus of construction. As the squealing saws, pounding hammers and beeping backhoes echo, two houses rise quickly from the sawdust.

By next week, the houses will become homes for two local families.

The two homes are being built in one week as part of the national Habitat for Humanity 2006 Home Builders Blitz, which began Monday in 130 locations across the nation.

Using donated materials and labor, the Battle Creek Area Habitat for Humanity is transforming two vacant lots into homes at 416 and 422 W. Jackson St., said Habitat volunteer coordinator Jeanne Kronemeyer.

"We have a lot of local businesses and sponsors that are offering their support," Kronemeyer said. "And the builders who are out here, giving up their time and resources and working long hours to get the homes up — they really show the kind of commitment they have to their community."

Local builders and contractors 4 Square Electric, Baker Concrete, Bidelman Construction LLC, Darrell Burke Construction, Evans Plumbing, Gothberg Construction, Lyster Construction LLC, Newman Construction, Redstone Group, Schweitzer Construction, Sims Heating and Cooling Service Inc. and TW Building will be on the job site this week lending a hand.

"I feel that I have a biblical mandate to use the skills that I was blessed with to give back to the community," said D.J. Burke, owner of Darrell Burke Construction.

By partnering with the Battle Creek Association of Home Builders, this project is the first time professionals are building the entire Habitat for Humanity homes rather than just assisting volunteers, Habitat's construction manager Dirk Van Stralen said.

"They go up pretty quick," Van Stralen said Tuesday as he surveyed a home that was fully framed in less than one day.

Some exterior and interior walls for the two houses were constructed by prisoners at the Michigan Department of Corrections in St. Louis. The walls were built at the prison and shipped to Battle Creek as part the Prison Build program, which provides prisoners with rehabilitation and job skills through construction work, said Prison Build crew leader Robert Howard.

Also assisting are "caravaners," volunteers who travel across the country in RVs to assist on Habitat for Humanity projects.

"Getting to know the volunteers at other Habitat for Humanity affiliates is wonderful," said Tom Braum, a caravaner from South Dakota who travels to building sites with his wife Marion. "There is such camaraderie and Battle Creek has really impressed us."

The houses will be on display at 4 p.m. Friday at a dedication service. Sandy Lincoln said she can't wait to see them, because she hopes to have her own Habitat home.

Lincoln is currently working to fulfill her 500 hours of "sweat equity," or volunteer hours home recipients must complete before they can move into a new home.

"Seeing how beautiful the homes look is so exciting," said Lincoln, who also is an employee at Habitat for Humanity. "I am looking forward to the day that I have one of my own."

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MEMO TO CABINET: ENCOURAGE CONTINUED EMPLOYMENT

A memo to Governor Jennifer Granholm's cabinet called on department heads to both tell state workers that Ms. Granholm does not support legislation to create an early retirement plan for civil service workers, and urges department heads to encourage workers to stay with the state and continue to "make a contribution."

The memo tells cabinet members: "There is no need to give employees an incentive to retire. Instead there is every reason to encourage these senior staff members to share their expertise, pursue excellence and make a contribution that will give them a sense of fulfillment."

HB 6117 was introduced last week calling for an early retirement program for state workers, but Ms. Granholm is opposed to instituting a new early-out plan a little more than three years after the last plan was enacted.

According to the memo from Teresa Bingman, deputy chief of staff for cabinet affairs and management, while officials have "communicated the correct information to your employees", rumors that an early retirement plan is being readied "remain prevalent."

Ms. Bingman said in the memo, a copy of which was obtained by Gongwer News Service: "it's been brought to my attention that some state employees have heard the rumor and have begun planning for an early retirement."

The last early retirement plan resulted in the loss of "many valuable long-term employees; thus, many years of institutional knowledge," Ms. Bingman said. In fact, the state was forced to temporarily rehire many retired workers to help shift many of its functions, including the unemployment system, to one run by fewer workers.

While Rep. Rick Jones (R-Grand Ledge) said an early retirement program could help save the state money, Ms. Bingman's memo said an early out program now could have an even more drastic affect on the state than the last program.

"Today, approximately 30 percent of our workforce is eligible to retire in the next five years and approximately 50 percent are eligible in 10 years. Therefore, implementing a similar program now would have an even greater impact than before and will decimate our workforce to the point that we would not be able to deliver the quality programs and services that our taxpayers rightfully demand," the memo said.

In addition to encouraging state workers to continue on the job, the memo says the state has to systematically prepare to recruit new workers as those that are eligible to retire take that step. "Accelerating current employees' retirement runs counter to this strategy."